

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LOME 01566 112128Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 LAB-04 /089 W
-----074873 120839Z /10

R 111435Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LOME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4135
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY COTONOU
AMEMBASSY KINSAHSA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT TO
SUBJ: MEETING OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE RPT

1. NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE RASSEMBLEMENT DU PEUPLE
TOGOLAIS (RPT) HELD A TWO DAY MEETING IN LOME ON MAY 8-9.
THE NATIONAL COUNCIL IS COMPOSED OF TOP LEVEL GOVERNMENT
AND PARTY OFFICIALS, SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS, REPRESENTATIVES
OF YOUTH, WOMEN, LABOR, AND THE TRADITIONAL CHIEFS, AND
DELEGATES FROM REGIONAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS. THE
MEETING'S PRINCIPAL TASK WAS TO OUTLINE A PROGRAM AIMED AT
IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. BESIDES ITS AGRICULTURAL
FOCUS (WHICH WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY BY AIRGRAM), THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL PASS RESOLUTIONS IN A NUMBER OF FIELDS:

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A. SYMBOLIC: A RESOLUTION INTERGRATED THE SEPARATE
SYMBOLS OF THE PARTY WITH THOSE OF THE NATION. THE PARTY
FLAG WAS SUPPRESSED, AND BOTH THE NATION AND THE PARTY ADOPTED
THE SAME NEW SLOGAN, "PEACE--UNION--SOLIDARITY."
COMPETITIONS WILL BE ORGANIZED TO CHOOSE A NEW NATIONAL/PARTY
ANTHEM AND A NEW COAT OF ARMS.

B. DUES: ALTHOUGH THE PARTY STATUTES HAVE ALWAYS PROVIDED FOR THE COLLECTION OF DUES, UP UNTIL NOW THE PARTY HAS REFRAINED FROM COLLECTING FROM ITS MEMBERS IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE RESISTENCE TO UNIVERSAL MEMBERSHIP. NOW THE PARTY FEELS STRONG ENOUGH TO REQUEST ALL ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE PEOPLE TO CONTRIBUTE ONE HALF OF ONE MONTH'S SALARY TO THE PARTY. SELF-EMPLOYED PEOPLE WILL BE TAXED AT COMPARABLE RATES. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER TOGO'S PEASANTS WILL HAVE TO PAY DUES.

C. LABOR: LAST YEAR THE NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF TOGOLESE WORKERS (CNTT) WAS GIVEN THE RIGHT TO A CHECK-OFF SYSTEM THIS YEAR THAT RIGHT WAS EFFECTIVELY WITHDRAWN BY A RESOLUTION SAYING THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE RPT, EYADEMA, CONTROLS ALL THE RESOURCES OF THE MOVEMENT, INCLUDING THOSE OF ITS "MARCHING WINGS." THE CNTT, ALONG WITH WOMEN'S AND YOUTH GROUPS, IS CONSIDERED A MARCHING WING.

D. EYADEMA DAY: APRIL 24 WAS DECLARED A PAID NATIONAL HOLIDAY AS THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT ON EYADEMA'S LIFE IN 1967.

E. RELIGION: IMPLEMENTING A RESOLUTION OF THE THIRD RPT CONGRESS IN 1976 IN LAMA KARA, THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ESTABLISHED TWO LISTS OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS. THE POSITIVE LIST SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED--IN ADDITION TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE PRACTICE OF CATHOLICISM, PROTESTANTISM, AND ISLAM-- THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN CHURCH OF THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD, THE TOGOLESE ASSOCIATION OF ADVESTISTS, AND THE BAPTIST CHURCH OF TOGO. THE NEGATIVE LIST NAMES 17 SECTS, MOSTLY SMALL AND OBSCURE, AND ENDS WITH AN "ETC." A FEW AMERICAN MISSIONARIES APPEAR TO BE AFFECTED BY THE RESOLUTION, BUT THIS QUESTION WILL REQUIRE FURTHER STUDY AND WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A SEPARATE MESSAGE.

2. COMMENT: TAKEN AS A WHOLE, THE NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING IS ANOTHER STEP IN THE PROCESS OF CENTRALIZATION OF ALL LOWER UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE PRESIDENT. THE RESOLUTIONS ON AGRICULTURAL MATTERS ARE AIMED AT MAKING TOGO SELF-SUFFICIENT IN FOOD AND TO THE DEGREE THEY ARE SUCCESSFUL, HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE BASIC HUMAN NEEDS OF THE GREAT MAJORITY OF TOGOLESE.

3. IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASSESS THE FULL IMPACT OF THE RESOLUTION ON RELIGIOUS SECTSN INCLUDING WHETHER IT HAS NEGATIVE HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS. THE EMBASSY HAS LITTLE IDEA HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE AFFECTED.

4. THE NEW SYSTEM OF DUES WILL NOT BE POPULAR. IN A SENSE, IT PROVIDES THE PARTY/GOT WITH A NEW SOURCE OF REVENUE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE LARGELY IGNORED INCOME TAX. THE RPT IS ORGANIZATIONALLY STRONG ENOUGH TO COLLECT.

5. THE RELAUNCHING OF THE "GREEN REVOLUTION" AGRICULTURAL CAMPAIGN AND THE OTHER MEASURES RECOMMENDED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE RPT HAVE LONG BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION IN THE PRESIDENT'S ENTOURAGE. THE USE OF A PARTY ORGAN INSTEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT TO ANNOUNCE THESE INITIATIVES IS TYPICAL OF TOGO'S POLITICAL STYLE. PALMER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, RELIGION, PARTY MEETINGS, RESOLUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LOME01566
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780201-0989
Format: TEL
From: LOME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780570/aaaachds.tel
Line Count: 126
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9b288ea0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2725097
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE RPT
TAGS: PINT, TO, RPT
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9b288ea0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014